

# SUZUKI PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS

Volume 2.1, January/February 1997

To facilitate, promote, and educate the public on the way of teaching and playing the piano taught at the Talent Education Research Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by Dr. Haruko Kataoka.

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## HOW CAN WE MAKE EVERYBODY HAPPY?

BY DR. HARUKO KATAOKA

If you want to make people around you happy you must first be happy yourself. How can we achieve happiness for ourselves? This is a very difficult question for which there is no easy answer.

It is only recently that I have begun to consider this question, and it is about time! I am finally becoming aware of the answer.

Some time ago I stayed in a hotel room where there was a book on the teachings of Shakamuni (Buddha). I read that in his youth he subjected himself to great physical pain, thinking that he would comprehend the purpose of rigorous exercise in suffering. He continued this kind of penance for years, until he finally came to the realization that there was no truth in such an exercise. At that point, he quit.

I attended a private Catholic girls' school from primary grades through high school. Even though conversion to the Catholic faith was not a requirement for students, I attended religion classes after school since I had an innate fondness for God. As a result, my way of thinking was greatly influenced by Catholicism, which taught me that we should serve others by means of our own self sacrifice as a way of expressing our love for humankind. If necessary, we should sacrifice our very lives for the sake of others. This is certainly an admirable way of thinking.

From an early age, this idea was firmly imprinted upon my heart. So I continued to think that I must make personal sacrifices in order to make others happy.

When I became an adult member of society and joined the work force, I realized that there were so many people who needed help that it would be very difficult to help each and every one of them.

I realized that help could come in two forms: physical (financial) and psychological. What one individual person can accrue from one job is small and has its limits. The thought of helping so many people is so overwhelming that it can drive one to ill health. Finally, I began realizing that I am not Christ, but a mere human being. There is no reason to think I could help and save so many people. Trying so desperately only led to feelings of inadequacy. Finally it became too painful and draining and led to discontent. As a result, those around me also became unhappy.

Years ago when my children were in the middle school years, I would come home after a long day's work and announce that I was exhausted and in a bad mood. Everybody then disappeared instantly and headed for their rooms upstairs. What I meant to convey was that, since I was so tired I was hoping that they would be kind and considerate. Their interpretation, on the other hand, was that being around an exhausted person who has lost her good humor would cause them great unhappiness, so they chose to flee. This situation helped me come to realize the error in my ways. [Unhappiness cannot create its opposite: it takes happiness to create happiness.]

We can see an analogy in the world of piano concerts, Being able to play music with ease and therefore filled with sound from the heart brings happiness to the performer, enabling him or her to perform a wonderful concert. In turn, those in the audience will receive great pleasure. In other words, first the performer must be focused on producing a musical sound by using the body and fingers in the most natural and relaxed way. To always study and research ways of improving opens a path to the performer's own happiness. The result is the ability to share happiness with others.

After attending a wonderful, special concert, you feel elated all the way home. In contrast, after a disappointing concert, you rush home so you can put on a recording of a great performer to get the bad sound out of your ears. It is similar to washing out a bad taste from your mouth. I always want to scream out: "Don't have concerts that make people so unhappy!"

***Let us take the lead and be the first to smile with a big, generous heart, affecting those around us with happiness. Let us aspire to play heartfelt music on the piano in order to bring happiness to people.***

If we do not ruin nature, and if we work with the proper basics of piano playing, children can be nurtured naturally to play freely. The result will be brilliant performances which will, in turn, bring those of us parents and teachers in the audience great happiness.

Reprinted from the *Newsletter* of the Matsumoto Piano Teachers Association of the Talent Education Research Institute, Vol.4, No.2, July 14, 1994. Translated by Teri Paradero. Edited by Karen Hagberg.

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## 1997 PIANO BASICS WORKSHOPS WITH DR. KATAOKA

June 8-13	Louisville, Kentucky	Grace Baugh Bennett	502-852-0537
June 23-27	Salt Lake City, Utah	Cleo Brimhall	801-943-1237
August 4-8	Rochester, New York	Karen Hagberg	716-244-0490
August 17-21	Sacramento, California	Linda Nakagawa	916-422-2952

### OTHER DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

July 27-31	West Coast Suzuki Institute, Irvine, California	Cheryl Teigert	714-524-1055
November 30	Ten-Piano Concert Matsumoto, Japan		

THE NEXT INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE WILL BE AUGUST 1998,  
PLACE TO BE DETERMINED

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## HOW TO TEACH BEGINNERS, NO. 20

### CLEMENTI: SONATINA, OPUS 36, NUMBER 1, *ANDANTE*

BY DR. HARUKO KATAOKA

In this second movement, we practice singing out a slow, calm melody in the right hand while playing triplets quietly and rhythmically in the left hand.

As with any other piece, first listen to the recordings many times before beginning to learn to play it.

Next, be sure to memorize the right hand and then the left hand parts separately before putting the hands together.

It is the student's job, with the help of a parent (just as from Book 1), to get the notes memorized in this way. If the student is older than ten, however, it may be possible for him or her to do this work alone.

After the piece has been memorized in this way, the teacher must then begin, little by little at each lesson, to teach playing it musically.

Since the piece is in triple time, the first note of each measure is a down feeling. It is a quiet piece, so we should always pay attention to this heartfelt and deep tone.

The right hand is in charge of the melody. The half note on C in measure 1 is not only sounded, but sung out heartily with the feeling of exhaling from the fingertip in the same way as a singer would sing it. We must continue to breathe out throughout the entire two beats. The next note on the third beat, a quarter note on F, should be played with a bright, light tone on the upbeat, inhaling clearly and connecting with the downbeat in the next measure on A. The second measure is the same thing.

There is a trill in the third measure. The ornament is very important. It must be flawless and beautiful, just like the accessories we wear when getting all dressed up.

Students playing this piece are not yet used to playing ornaments. Therefore, it is important to choose one that is easy to understand and to play correctly:

	3	2	3	2		3	2	3	2		3	2	1	2
Right:	la	sol	la	sol		la	sol	la	sol		la	sol	fa	sol
Left:	do					mi					sol			

I think these are easiest to understand and to play. Pay attention to the la-sol-la-sol groupings in the right hand, which must be played with a very small, light tone.

In the left hand, it is very important to practice measures 1-3. In each triplet, the first note must be played carefully, and the second and third notes with very light tone. Practice playing these measures in the left hand very quietly with light tone every day. They should be played as quietly as possible. This is true of the triplets all the way to the end of the piece.

The eighth-note triplets from the fourth measure in the right hand must be practiced with a singing legato.

Play the right-hand chords in measure 9 as if holding something with soft hands and soft fingers. Execute the triplets the same way as you play them in the left hand, with the second and third notes of each one with very light tone.

There are certain notes in the melody which must be sung out carefully, in a heartfelt way. For example:

In m. 6, the A (la) on the second beat with the fifth finger,  
In m. 8, the C (do), a dotted eighth note on the first beat,  
In m. 11, the F (fa) in the first beat (2nd note of the triplet) with the fifth finger,  
In m. 13, the Eb on the second beat,  
In m. 15, the D (re) on the second beat, and  
In m. 16, the chord CA (do-la) on the third beat.

In measure 26, the final measure of the piece, play the left hand arpeggio slowly and quietly, fully expressing a feeling of peaceful closure.

A teacher must give patient guidance to the student so that the ability to do these things may be gradually developed. It is a process that takes many weeks. The student will not be able to play the left hand quietly if the teacher tells him or her once or twice to do it. The ability will be developed only if the teacher demonstrates how it is done at every lesson. Please never forget that in order to teach children we must use our bodies, not our heads.

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## PIANO BASICS WORKSHOP IN SINGAPORE

*In Singapore there is one Suzuki piano teacher, Clare Sie, who has studied with Dr. Haruko Kataoka. She is working hard to introduce the Suzuki Method to the families of Singapore. Clare works for the Yamaha Music School, so through this school and privately she shares her knowledge and experience with other teachers interested in learning more about the Suzuki Method. They have yet to start a "research group" but hopefully one will begin in the near future.*

Clare Sie and the Yamaha Music School invited Linda Nakagawa to give a Suzuki piano workshop for interested teachers in Singapore. Other American teachers and students who attended were **Fumi Kawasaki**, (Sunnyvale, California); **Jill Wellman** and her daughter, **Jillany**, and Jill's two students, **Joel and Nathan Wong** (Portland, Oregon); **Karolyn McGladdery** and her daughter, **Laura** (Lodi, California); and Linda's students **Ricky Wang, Crystal and Raymond Tran** (Sacramento, California). The workshop was held November 25-28 at the Music Plaza Piano Chamber. Ninety-five percent of the piano teachers attending the workshop use the traditional method, and for many of the teachers this workshop was their first exposure to the Suzuki Method.

Linda began the workshop with the background of the Suzuki Method. She talked about Dr. Suzuki's philosophy of education and the importance of creating a good environment. She also shared with us her own experiences of learning the piano, her studies with Dr. Haruko Kataoka, and her experience teaching her own students. As she taught the Singapore students, the teachers and parents were able to observe and learn. Throughout the workshop she demonstrated "what" and "how" to practice.

The four day seminar ended with a Friendship Concert of American and Singapore Suzuki students at Jubilee Hall in the Raffles Hotel. Through music this concert brought together the students of the two nations, whose friendship began to grow and develop. They encouraged and motivated each other to practice, and amazingly, the result was evident in their performance.

Even though the Suzuki Piano Method is very new in Singapore, the seminar was very well received by the teachers who participated. They are very eager to learn, and they look forward to the next workshop, as well as receiving more information and materials about the Suzuki Piano Method in the future.

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## SINGAPORE IMPRESSIONS

**STUDENTS:** In Singapore, I had a very nice host family, they took me lots of places. It was also fun to be with Linda's students Ricky, Crystal and Raymond. We became good friends. In Singapore the people were very nice and so polite. I really enjoyed going to the zoo. Singapore was extremely clean. The Friendship concert was fun.... I felt I played O.K. Singapore was a great experience. Though it was hot and humid, we all survived. The families were great hosts. No one was shy about anything either. The kids were really lively. They always had something to say.

We got a tour by our family. It is really beautiful. Everything in Singapore is green and colorful. The food was a little different. Just about every morning our family had sandwiches--tuna or toasted bread with chocolate spread, cheddar cheese and bananas.. The people there were extremely friendly. The sites were wonderful. I hope I can go there again and maybe next time I can also go to Matsumoto.

Singapore was a great experience. They have many different religions which means a variety of foods from different cultural groups. The people are very fun to be with. They spend their free time shopping, exploring, playing sports and games, and other recreational activities.

My trip to Singapore was certainly fun and interesting. I must say, it was an amazingly clean city. It was great to visit a warm summer place in contrast to the bitter winds and rains we have had in Sacramento. The people in Singapore were very nice to us.

**TEACHERS:** In Singapore, our host family was wonderful. They all spoke in an elegant British accent. I can still hear the mom remarking, "It's a beautiful day, no?" The parents work very hard running their business. They were so much fun. We ate in places that served some of the best Indian and Italian cuisine I have ever tasted. We spent an afternoon at the Singapore swimming club, and a day at Sentosa Island. Singapore is a very friendly, clean, beautifully-landscaped country. It is also very expensive, but safe because of their strict criminal laws. One of the prettiest sights were the thousands of Christmas lights and decorations in the main business district--it must be the most extravagant in the world.

Everyone was so supportive and encouraging. The group was friendly, positive and eager to learn more about the Suzuki Piano Method.

It was my pleasure to work with the teachers in Singapore. They were all very open and eager to learn. I hope they will continue their study and research of the basics! The families in Singapore were also very receptive and kind, and I appreciate the opportunity to work with them. Let's continue to work harder for the children.

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## AFTER SINGAPORE--A TRIP TO MATSUMOTO

Three teachers from Singapore (**Clare Sie, Yi Ling and Siok Khoon**); tour students from America (**Jillany Wellman, Laura McGladdery, Joel Wong and Nathan Wong**) and four teachers from America (**Fumi Kawasaki, Jill Wellman, Karolyn McGladdery and Linda Nakagawa**) arrived in Matsumoto on November 30. We were met by the host families and teachers of Matsumoto. The students stayed for one week and the teachers stayed for two weeks.

Our main purpose was to observe Dr. Kataoka teach her students and learn more about the Suzuki Method. We had a very busy schedule in Matsumoto. Besides observing Dr. Kataoka's lessons, we were fortunate enough to hear Hiroo Ohtsuki (a nine year old student of Dr. Kataoka's) rehearse and perform the Haydn Piano Concerto with the Matsumoto Orchestra, two Graduation recitals, a Saturday evening concert, and several rehearsals.

### MATSUMOTO IMPRESSIONS

**STUDENTS:** In Japan, it was very cold all the time. It was very neat to see the Japanese Suzuki students have lessons with their teacher, Dr. Kataoka; also to meet the other Japanese teachers. All in all, I had a lot of fun, and would go again if I could. In Japan we had snow, but it was a dry cold so it did not feel so cold. I had fun folding origami with our host family, the Ohwas'. Japan was an interesting cultural experience.

**TEACHERS:** IMPRESSIVE! I heard great performances, saw excellent teaching and I met good people. This is the fifth time that I had been to Matsumoto and yet I still get excited. The tone of the piano in Matsumoto is like angels singing. Kataoka Sensei and Dr. Suzuki are sincere and humble educators. They make a cradle for young children to become good musicians with high ability. It is the heart and spirit that motivates me to bring good music to students.

It was a very valuable experience learning from Kataoka Sensei. I saw how to "get ready" etc., paving the road for the child and leading them to the great art of piano playing. This indeed is Talent Education as I expected to see.

To observe Kataoka Sensei teaching her students for two weeks was a "dream come true. Everyday of OBSERVATION felt like Christmas and New Year's Day Celebration rolled into one! Kataoka Sense continually emphasized the importance of the Basic Skills. Although Kataoka Sensei had a very busy schedule, she found time for us visiting teachers to have lessons, giving us encouragement and hope! One day students and teachers went to Hamamatsu, the city where the Kawai piano factory is located. We were taken on a tour and saw how each section or part is carefully made and tested before placing them together to build a piano. It was a fascinating experience and I returned with a better understanding and appreciation for my pianos. After the tour of the factory, we visited the Hamamatsu Museum of Musical Instruments. There is historical information about early to modern-day instruments from Europe, Asia, Africa, etc. Earphones made it possible to hear what some early instruments sounded like.

The Japanese teachers seem to devote each and every day to their students. The playing level of all these children is incredible. I actually thought I had heard the highest level here in America, . . .but folks, there is more to be heard out there! The hospitality of the host families was very, very nurturing to our American students. The last evening before the American children were to leave for home, we were all together having a farewell potluck. Dr. Kataoka said, I hear the children played in a Friendship Concert in Singapore. Why don't we have a little one here at the house!" and so you should have seen the American students fly down to the other house to practice. After dinner we all sat around and listened to Sensei's students play (and mine).. all in one room together.. I find that to be a very generous thing. There really are no words for the love and energy she gave us. I think we will not be the same people now, for it.

Some of the special day trips included making ceramics in a mountain cabin, the Kawai Piano Factory, the Rokuzan Art Museum, a musical instrument museum, and a glass factory. In Matsumoto, some of us went to Matsumoto Castle, Dr. Suzuki's Memorial house, and Christmas shopping. My musical expectations were high. I expected--perfection, I guess-- and went with rose-colored ears on" you might say. I was enraptured with the Suzuki students' gorgeously clear tone, their musical sense and line, and their technical balance and facility. I had much to take in. But I was also relieved to realize we are all just human beings, whether Japanese or American. Sometimes as I observed lessons, I

thought nothing was going in. I was assured, however, that it would all come together when I started teaching my own students again. That has been so true--I was amazed--I learned more than I expected.

I always learn so much every time I go to Matsumoto. I consider myself a very lucky person to have the opportunity to study with Kataoka Sensei. Just being in the environment helps me to understand the Suzuki Method a little more. Observing Sensei teach and hearing the students play motivates me to work harder for our students.

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## LEGAL UPDATE

At our general membership meeting of Piano Basics Foundation in Atlanta in August, we discussed the letter we received from the International Suzuki Association's attorney demanding that we no longer call Dr. Kataoka a Suzuki Method teacher. It was unanimously voted at that meeting not to give in to this demand and to respond to the ISA with an attorney of our own, in addition to letting them know our individual opinions through personal correspondence.

We retained the services of an attorney to respond to the ISA's letter. He spent many hours researching the history of the Suzuki Method and its dissemination around the world, and he also checked into the trademark rights which are held by the ISA. After doing this research, he wrote a letter to the ISA's attorney requesting evidence supporting their view that Dr. Kataoka is not a Suzuki Method teacher and that her teaching is not consistent with the methods and techniques of Dr. Suzuki. This letter was sent on October 1, 1996 and we have received no response to date.

Meanwhile, our attorney feels that we have every legal right to call Dr. Kataoka, and ourselves, Suzuki Method teachers based upon any standards in existence. The Piano Committee of the Suzuki Association of the Americas has recommended that the SAA continue to support Dr. Kataoka's status at a Suzuki Method teacher trainer, and the Piano Teacher Trainers in the European Suzuki Association have drafted a proposal recognizing Dr. Kataoka's importance as the pioneer who developed Suzuki Piano Method and declaring that any teacher trained by her is a "fully legitimate Suzuki Method teacher."

Forming the legal response to the ISA's letter required a good deal of time and money. We hope that this will be the end of it, but we are prepared to continue a legal battle with the ISA if forced to do so.

It is the position of Piano Basics Foundation that the ISA's campaign against Dr. Kataoka is a misuse of its members' resources. That, in itself would be unfortunate enough, but it has forced, and may continue to force, us to divert our own members' resources as well. We are content, however, that we have carried out the wishes of our membership as expressed unanimously in Atlanta.

Thanks to all of you who took the time to express your opinions to the leadership of the ISA. Our office has received copies of many of these. If you have written a letter, or plan to write one in the future, please make sure we have copy of it.

We want to make it clear to all our members that Dr. Suzuki is, in no way, responsible for these recent ISA actions. He is, unfortunately, unaware of them.

Let us all hope for a New Year in which we may use our precious energy and resources in constructive ways for the benefit of our students.

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## LET'S CAMPAIGN FOR THE JAPANESE SCORES

### AN EDITORIAL FROM THE STAFF

**PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION** has heard from numerous teachers who are not happy with the volumes of the Suzuki Piano Method published by Summy-Birchard. Compared with the Japanese editions (published by Zen-On), which are truly visual works of art, the American editions have always been lacking. In the American edition, for example, the paper is glaring white instead of a softer, ivory tone which is much easier on the eyes. The margins are very skimpy. In some volumes the inside of the back cover has been used for printed music. The spacing of the measures is inconsistent and the notes are small. All of these things create a cramped and disorganized overall effect.

If you compare the Japanese and American editions side-by-side these differences and problems are very obvious to anyone. Many teachers feel that the appearance of the printed score is a very important matter. A beautifully-printed score lends itself to a beautiful performance. The converse is also true.

Unfortunately, the Japanese editions have not been available for sale outside of Japan. Teachers who do not want to use the American editions are faced with a dilemma. Some teachers have said that they will recommend other editions of the pieces contained in the upper volumes past Book 2. Although using other editions is a viable, albeit expensive, alternative, there maybe a better solution.

In the past, Summy-Birchard has been very responsive to the demands created by various subgroups of Suzuki-Method teachers in providing more than one "official" recording of the pieces in the repertoire. Most recently, they have begun to re-issue the Valerie Lloyd Watts recordings in addition to offering the recordings by Dr. Kataoka, Meiko Miyazawa, and William Aide, for example. We wonder if they would not also positively respond to our need for the Japanese editions. All that may be necessary is for us teachers to inform them that there is, indeed, a demand out here for these materials. We are hoping that they could become the distributor of these editions throughout the world.

So we encourage all of you who have been frustrated with the American editions to make your feeling known to the publisher. Summy-Birchard cannot be expected to respond until they are fully aware of what we teachers need.

Please direct your letter to:

**Ms. Judi Gowe  
Warner Brothers Publications  
15800 N.W. 48th Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33014**

And please send a copy of your letter to Piano Basics Foundation for our files. Thank you very much.

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## **CD NEWS**

As we lament the present difficulty of obtaining the spectacular recordings of Handel's *Harmonious Blacksmith* by Alicia DeLarocha and Sergei Rachmaninov, we are happy to have found a new recording which is quite nice. It is a clear, straightforward interpretation by the Hungarian pianist Balazs Szokolay on a recording called *Romantic Piano Favourites*, vol.3 (Naxos 8.550107). As a bonus to Suzuki teachers, Schubert's *Happy Farmer* (here referred to as *Merry Peasant*) and the Paderewski *Minuet* are also included among the twenty selections on this recording, all of which are truly "favorites" of the romantic literature. It is a recording which would be a fine addition to any student's library and maybe ordered through the **Wireless Catalogue, 1-800-669-5959**.

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## **FROM THE PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS STAFF**

**WITH THIS ISSUE OF PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS, WE EXTEND TO EACH OF YOU OUR APPRECIATION FOR YOUR SUPPORT OF PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION DURING THE PAST YEAR. WE WISH YOU AND YOUR FAMILY A HAPPY NEW YEAR!**

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## **A REMINDER**

**ALL MEMBERSHIPS ARE UP FOR RENEWAL ON JANUARY 1, 1997.  
THIS IS YOUR LAST NEWSLETTER UNLESS 1997 DUES ARE PAID BY MARCH 1, 1997.**

We are printing this reminder in lieu of sending out renewal notices to each member. All members must pay their dues (\$25.00) for the 1997 fiscal year by March 1, 1997 in order to continue receiving their newsletters, to be listed in the directory and to continue as members in good standing with all the benefits of membership. Membership fees and donations to Piano Basics Foundation are tax-deductible.

There are not many kinds of work which are as rewarding, challenging and gratifying as teaching children. And there is so very much work to be done. Let us all work with a spirit of cooperation and dedication and face our great challenge together, remembering that, "*Only art can save the world.*"

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**PLEASE CONSULT THE NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ISSUE OF *PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS*  
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**SUZUKI PIANO BASICS FOUNDATION NEWS  
CALL FOR ARTICLES**

We need your articles, letters and comments. Please send them to the editorial staff:

*Piano Basics Foundation News*  
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**DEADLINE FOR NEXT ISSUE FEBRUARY 15, 1997**

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